

Mission Day, December 24

Sunday, December 24, the day before Christmas, has been announced as a day when the pastors of all our churches are to preach missionary sermons and take a special offering for the National Mission Board. It is unfortunate that no paper was issued last week. It is rather late now to bring the matter properly before our people, tho announcement was made several weeks ago and attention called to it editorially. A more appropriate day could not have been selected. If at any time more than another there should be awakened within us a special missionary zeal, it is on this day when, not only everything connected with our public worship reminds us of the eventful day when Jesus was born a Savior, but also the display in the shop and store windows of our cities, towns and villages, and in fact on every hand are to be seen the evidences of the good will and peace among men which Jesus the Savior brought into the world,—on this day there should come to us not only feelings of joy and gladness, but there should come to each one who has named the name of Jesus a realization of responsibility in carrying the good news of salvation to the dark places of the earth. There are thousands, yea multiplied thousands, in our own land who know not the peace and the joy and the blessedness of salvation from sin and its bondage. Can our joy be full and our peace complete without remembering in a very substantial way these multitudes of souls who are yet in darkness, whose souls are starving for the want of, and craving for the bread of life? Shall we withhold from them the blessed gift of eternal life for the sake of a few paltry dollars with which we may have fallen in love? Verily not. If you enjoy your religion (and if you do not it is a question if you have any) do not be selfish with it.

Your estimate of the joy and the peace and the rest which Christ has brought to your soul must be measured by what you are willing to give to have this same joy and peace and rest brought to the knowledge of those who are living in darkness and in the bondage of sin. Let Sunday, December 24, be a great day in the life of the Brethren church. Let the pastors preach missionary sermons and make an appeal in behalf of our missionary enterprises. The collection thru-out the brotherhood should aggregate a very respectable sum for our home work. Let the church do its duty and the Lord will bless the effort.

Some Weighty Matters

Some curious investigator has estimated the weight of water let down in a single thunder shower at a hundred million tons. He calculates that at the time of the Johnstown flood, nearly nine thousand million tons of water fell in the state of Pennsylvania

alone. This is an illustration of the immense scale of nature's operations. But in some matters the idea of weight can not be expressed by figures. What for example would be the estimate in tons of the weight of a guilty conscience? How heavy is the wrath of God? What is the tonnage of an evil record, or a bad reputation? How heavy is that clog, that mill-stone of a vicious habit, which holds your soul down to the gross earth, and sinks it in the mire? When a man is free from burdens of every nature, we call him light hearted, and the idea suggests by contrast the heaviness of sorrow, and trouble of any kind. Sin is a burden beside which the mountains are but as sprigs of down. What an almost infinite variety of burdens there are in the world, and how heavy they are, and how we sigh to be rid of them. And altho a Divine Burden Bearer has come to help us, yet how slow is our faith to "cast your burden on the Lord," or to believe that he will "sustain you." Would it not be a good beginning for the new year to learn how to shift this heavy burden of our lives, whatever the nature of that burden may be, to those strong shoulders which are able to bear it,—able, and so lovingly ready and willing? How blessed it would be to start light hearted into the new year. And how much strength would be set free to devote to the active and benevolent duties of the Christian life. "Commit your way unto the Lord." "Cast all your care upon him who careth for you." "Be careful for nothing, but in everything, by prayer and thanksgiving, make your wants known unto God, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding will keep your minds and hearts thru Christ Jesus." Before these blessed words, all the philosophies and precepts of the wise pale into nothing. Here is the ultimate wisdom before which the wisdom of the world vanishes, like the ephemeral dream of a creature who himself is but for a moment and then vanishes away.

Light Messages

One of the most wonderful contrivances of modern science is the Heliograph, a device by which the rays of the sun are used to flash intelligence from distant points. It is now being employed in the South African war, and by its means messages have been transmitted from the beleaguered garrison in Ladysmith to their friends on distant mountain tops. The encircling armies of the Boers are unable to prevent or intercept these messages which are flashed right over their heads to and from the town. Each party, the British in the town, and those approaching in the army of relief, possessing the same code are able to understand each other, while to the Boers the messages are unintelligible. If we should stop to think, would we not discover that of old a divine Heliograph has

been flashing its light messages to this beleaguered world? There is the daily message of God's never failing providence in the rising of the sun, and the shedding abroad of his warm, fructifying rays upon our fields and gardens, insuring the harvest and the horn of plenty. These messages have a simple code which all can easily understand. They say that God loves the world, that he takes thought for its welfare, that he spreads for the nations his bounteous table, that he is a filler of barns and store houses. What if he should command his sun no longer to arise? Of what worth would be all our possessions, and our lives? See how many gracious messages are thus flashed to us from the sun. And then there are messages flashed from the light of the stars. What a glorious message came once to a benighted world by the glory of a star, that star which led the wise men, which lighted the dark manger, and has since lighted the darkness of many a soul. Light messages such as the world never saw before or since were flashed upon the shepherds "watching their flocks by night," when the glory world was opened to the dull gaze of mortals, and the herald angel proclaimed good will to men, and a new access of God's glory. And still the stars flash their messages, only there are so few who look up, or who seem able to read the heavenly code. "Gentlemen," said Napoleon the great to his officers, after he had listened to all their arguments against the existence of a God, "All that is very interesting," but, (lifting his hand with a sweeping gesture across the starry heavens,) "who made all these?" Even to his worldly mind the stars flashed a message of the Infinite, his being, his wisdom, his power. To others with purer vision they flash messages also of his love. He upholds them all, and by the greatness of his power not one faileth. The message is, that in God's hand, you will not fail, or fall, for the soul in his sight is of more value than many worlds. A thousand messages are flashed from a thousand worlds and a thousand burning suns, telling the sons of men to trust in God, and to believe with full assurance that he is able to protect us from every peril, and to bring us into a glory of which the starry host, the infinite expanse of the heavens, and the splendor of its nightly array, is but a faint, and yet sublime significant prophecy.

Brethren H. M. Oberholtzer and William Beachler, on last Sunday morning, drove twelve miles across the country to Fair Haven, and filled an appointment at that place. They report a good meeting. That is good practice for "Theos."

The readers of this paper will be glad to hear once more from sister Mary M. Sterling. She reports five accessions at Rock Camp, Va.